

# RFE LANGUAGE ARTS BULLETIN

May 22, 2006



WRITE ON!  
PROMPTS



Website  
[www.writingfix.com](http://www.writingfix.com)



**Y**ou write to communicate to the hearts and minds of others what's burning inside you. And we edit to let the fire show through the smoke.

~Arthur Polotnik ~

**WRITE ON!** We have been working diligently in the area of writing. Over the last few weeks, students and staff have been learning a lot about the descriptors and elements of the ideas trait. This weekend, I spent time reading the various grade level responses and I must say that I was impressed with student creativity and understanding of the ideas trait. There's no doubt in my mind that your efforts are making a difference.

As a staff, cross-scoring revealed that we are doing an outstanding job accurately scoring student papers in the ideas trait. In regards to written feedback, a vast majority of staff is successfully using the rubric descriptors to give students specific, constructive feedback. I found it extremely beneficial to view the child's funnel and web *before* reading their piece (I would encourage you to do this as well...this shed some light on the student's thinking & right away you could "see" if their idea was focused or too broad and whether they had enough interesting, supporting details).

One problematic area that I saw while reading the papers was that several students veered away from the focus of the prompt...unintentionally (initially there was a connection, but it got lost in translation). For example, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade prompt was a special place. One student selected her bedroom as her special place because it contains a picture of her grandma that passed away. It was a powerful, moving story, but the connection to the bedroom being a special place was lost in the descriptive detail of grandma. In other words, was this a story about a special place or special memory?! So how do we help our students keep focus?

"Does my central idea connect with the theme?" When encountering this on the writing checklist, train students to go back and reread the prompt they selected and *think* about the story they wrote. Do they truly connect? I would also suggest that students write the prompt they selected right on the web (inside the drop along with their idea). When you see these two together, you are less likely to wander away from the focus of the prompt.

On the back of this bulletin, you will find a RFE student response. Also, I have copied and attached a great lesson idea from Lindsay Smith. Thank you! ☺

## **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Response to “Special Place” Prompt**

### **by RFE Student: Kiplin Kaldahl 2006<sup>©</sup>**

“Wooooosh!” the black SUV wispered as it passed by my special tree. I am sitting in my special tree. I love it. In the month of May, my tree is filled with flowers, flowers, flowers. These megenta flowers are very pretty.

But they’re flowers, and flowers mean bees. There are so many of these bees that you can hear them from a few feet away. It sounds like a tiny horn who invited his itty-bitty friends to a party in the tree. The bees don’t scare me, though. I know that they are too interested in the flowers to sting me.

“Wooooosh!” another car flies by. Most people wouldn’t like their tree by a road, but I like it. The swishing sound makes me feel strong, somehow. It makes me feel, alive. Yeah, thats it. I feel alive. I also like the view of the valley. This valley is tilled with dandilions. The little yellow dots on the lush green carpet looks unreal. Every once in a while you will see a hyper little squirrel, or a pecking black bird in the valley.

But my favorite thing about my special place is the life. Every where you look, you see life, whether it’s flowers or squirrels or bumble bees, it’s life. It’s beautiful! Sure this tree isn’t that comfy, and not to easy to get to get to, but it is still a very, very special place!

---

<sup>©</sup> Printed with Kiplin’s permission...typed exactly as printed. This paper is rated strong within the ideas trait and demonstrates lots of writer’s craft: onomatopoeia, sensory images, similes, metaphors, word repetition, and so forth.